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Nevada Site Office Environmental Management

EM NEWS FLASH

Nevada Test Site One Step Closer to Opening New Mixed Low-Level Waste Disposal Cell

February 17th, 2010 marked the beginning of the design phase on a new [mixed low-level waste disposal cell](#) at the Nevada Test Site. The U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office Management and Operating contractor, National Security Technologies, LLC, awarded Andrews Engineering, Inc., the design and construction sub-contract on the heels of a December of 2009 conditional permit granted by the State of Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) allowing for construction and operation of the new cell. The permit falls under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), a law that identifies the requirements for managing hazardous wastes in the United States.

The new disposal unit will be constructed near the existing mixed low-level waste disposal cell at the Nevada Test Site's Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Site. This unit has been operating under a RCRA Disposal Permit since December 2005. The terms of this permit allow the existing cell to remain open until the end of November 2010 or until it reaches its capacity of 20,000 cubic meters.

Constructing the replacement mixed low-level waste cell, which will hold approximately 25,000 cubic meters of waste, will ensure continued disposal capabilities beyond this closure date.

The new mixed low-level waste cell will be an excavated trench with an impermeable liner and leachate collection system. Under RCRA, the cell is permitted to accept a "mix" of both radioactive waste and hazardous waste, which can include debris, soil, trash, equipment, tools and protective clothing.

Once Andrews Engineering, Inc., finalizes the design on the new cell, which is expected during the summer of 2010, the Nevada Site Office can submit the plans to NDEP and obtain full permit approval. The construction phase will immediately follow, beginning in late summer with a final completion date scheduled for early 2011.



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